General Audiences

No Archive Warnings Apply

F/M
Gen

How to Train Your Dragon (Animated Movies)
DreamWorks Dragons (Cartoon)

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Fishlegs Ingerman
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Ruffnut Thorston
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Snotlout Jorgenson
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Tuffnut Thorston
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III/Astrid Hofferson
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Toothless
Astrid & Fishlegs & Hiccup & Ruffnut & Snotlout & Tuffnut
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Hiccup's Dragon Riders

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III
Astrid Hofferson
Snotlout Jorgenson
Fishlegs Ingerman
Tuffnut Thorston
Ruffnut Thorston
Toothless (How to Train Your Dragon)
Hiccup's Dragon Riders (How to Train Your Dragon)

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III Whump
Hurt Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III Needs a Hug
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III & Toothless Friendship
Dragons: Race to the Edge
Descriptions of Injury
Violence
5+1 Things
Protective Toothless (How to Train Your Dragon)
Sick Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III
Sickfic
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III-centric
Whump
Fluff and Hurt/Comfort
Protective Astrid Hofferson
English 10/10 (insatiablehunger)

For When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

AncillaLucis

Summary:

5 Times the Riders Took Care of Hiccup + 1 Time He Took Care of Himself

From overworking himself to taking blows for his friends, Hiccup is taken care of by each of the Riders until he finally learns to take care of himself.

All take place during Race to the Edge!

Notes:

Hello!

There are so many fanfics about Astrid protecting Hiccup and not enough about the other Riders doing the same. Thus, I wrote this. I'm probably going to post new chapters every two or three days. The order of the chapters will be: Fishlegs, Ruffnut, Snotlout, Tuffnut, Astrid, then Hiccup.

Enjoy!

As of 10/20/25, I've edited the chapters a bit, hopefully making them a bit less choppy and a bit more realistic.

Chapter 1 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/164571547) : Fishlegs

Notes:

(See the end of the chapter for notes (#chapter_1_endnotes) .)

In the last light of the day, when the tips of white clouds began to be tinted rose, Hiccup and Fishlegs were experimenting on the beach. Surrounded by pots and shovels, they were mixing different combinations of sand and ash around, trying to create a mixture that could melt and would solidify into a reinforced type of glass sturdy enough to stand against the merciless storms that sometimes plagued the Edge.

They were both working quickly, fighting against the setting sun. Each attempt at melting their mixtures in a small furnace they had managed to bring along got them closer to a desired result. However, Fishlegs' attempts seemed to be consistently much more successful than Hiccup's.

"Ooh! Just think of it, Hiccup," Fishlegs squealed excitedly, "if we find the right formula, we can install windows into our huts!"

"Why would we need windows again?" Hiccup asked good-naturedly, scooping some sand into a pot.

"Well, I can't be in my meditation garden all the time. If I could see the outside from the inside, I'd get all the serenity and contemplative-ness of nature in the shelter of my own hut!"

"I'm not sure that's how it works," Hiccup replied, scooping some sand.

"It's the whole reason we're doing this," Fishlegs stated happily, "the twins gave me the idea today when they blew a hole through my wall. I eventually got them to fix it, but I realized I actually kinda liked being able to see the outside from inside. I wouldn't have dragged you all the way down here instead of eating Heather's cooking if I didn't think it'd add greatly to the tranquil quality of my home."

Hiccup merely nodded, setting a pot mechanically into the furnace. Fishlegs watched him perturbedly, sensing something was off.

"You are okay with skipping dinner, right?" he asked nervously.

"What? Yeah, totally. Don't worry about me, Fishlegs, I'm fine." Hiccup said, stepping back from the furnace.

Fishlegs turned back to his work. Despite his friend's assurances, Fishlegs began to regret not postponing this impromptu project until the next day. It felt wrong to deprive Hiccup of a warm, restful meal because of his own excitement. *Well*, he thought to himself, *I'm not* depriving *Hiccup of anything because he* agreed *to come along, right?* Fishlegs sighed. How Hiccup found the time and will to add little things like this into his already busy life Fishlegs didn't know…

They worked in comfortable silence, each engrossed in their tests. Toothless and Meatlug, however, had long been entertaining themselves by jumping on one another as their humans tried to concentrate. They became rowdier and rowdier until Meatlug crashed into their workspace, knocking a pot over.

"Meatlug! You've got to be more careful!"Fishlegs scolded in the direction of the two dragons, who were now standing solemnly, staring at the overturned pot in remorse. "Pick that up! –um, well, if you can," Fishlegs said. There was little chance Meatlug would be able to pick the pot up with her big jaw without more mishap.

“I’ll get it,” Hiccup said, leaving his work to pick up the pot.

“Thanks, Hiccup,” Fishlegs replied, turning back to his work.

Not a moment had passed when Fishlegs heard another crash just like the one before.

“Seriously, girl?” Fishlegs snapped, turning around, “I just told you—Hiccup?”

Fishlegs rushed to where he saw Hiccup’s limp form spread out on the sand. The pot he had gone to retrieve was lying next to him, overturned (yet again), and Toothless was lingering over him, sniffing him worriedly.

“Hiccup?” Fishlegs said, kneeling by Hiccup’s side. When the boy didn’t respond, Fishlegs began gently shaking him by the shoulders. “Hiccup?”

In only a few seconds, Hiccup began to stir. *Oh thank Thor*, Fishlegs thought to himself. Hiccup was okay, for now at least. But what had caused him to collapse so suddenly? Was he hurt?

Hiccup opened his eyes. “Fishlegs?” he asked.

“Yes, Hiccup, I’m here. Are you okay? Are you hurt?”

Hiccup, after briefly, surveying his surroundings, began to push away Fishlegs’ worried hands and Toothless’ worried snout. “Yeah, I’m okay,“ he said, confidently, quickly rising from the sandy beach.

“Wait! Don’t get up—” Fishlegs tried to say. He lunged forward and caught Hiccup as the boy went limp before he could hit the ground again.

“Hiccup, I’ve got to say, that was pretty stupid,” he said, propping the dazed Hiccup against Toothless.

“Yeah, you’re right, it was” Hiccup replied weakly. From underneath Hiccup Toothless grunted scoldingly in agreement with Fishlegs. But when Hiccup didn’t respond, Toothless crooned sadly, nudging Hiccup’s arm.

“It’s okay, bud. I’m okay, really,” Hiccup comforted Toothless, scratching him under the chin to reassure him.

Fishlegs was not convinced.

“Hiccup, when was the last time you ate or drank anything?“

Hiccup sighed. "Well… I came to lunch, but then Johann arrived with those supples we needed, and well, you know Johann. By the time he was done talking it was time for training.”

“And what about breakfast?” Fishlegs prompted, “wait—you weren’t even at breakfast! What were you doing?”

“Finishing up the repairs on Astrid’s axe. I was so close to finishing it seems pointless to take a break.”

“Finish?” But Astrid had given her axe to Hiccup to repair *last night*! Fishlegs had seen it when she gave it to Hiccup. It was so damaged—almost beyond repair—that most Vikings would have just given up on it and picked up a new weapon. Hiccup finished all those seemingly impossible repairs that morning? No, he *must* have spent most of the night doing them. In fact, he must have spent *all* night doing them.

Fishlegs couldn’t remember a time (at least in his current frenzied state) that he had been so shocked and appalled. He waved his arms around as he nearly yelled, “Astrid gave that axe to you *yesterday*! And you finished it this morning? How? That axe was super damaged! No wonder you’re so tired! It must have taken you all night! You worked on it all night?”

“Couldn’t sleep,” Hiccup explained simply.

The tension in Fishlegs’ body instantly relaxed at Hiccup’s words. His shock melted into concern. It didn’t surprise him then in that moment that Hiccup had trouble sleeping. The war with Viggo and the occasional phantom pains would doubtlessly keep Hiccup awake at night. Surely, Hiccup *wanted* to sleep after exhausting days of being the Edge’s fearless leader, but he wasn’t able to—it was out of his control. Fishlegs couldn’t believe he hadn’t thought of that before.

But what about eating meals? *That* Hiccup *could* control.

“Hiccup,” Fishlegs said into the silence, his voice full of sincere curiosity, “how did you go a full day without finding time or remembering to eat anything?”

“I don’t know,“ Hiccup said, tired of Fishlegs’ inquiries, “I guess I just got distracted.”

Fishlegs couldn’t help but lightly scoff at this weak answer, so dismissive of the speaker’s well-being.

“But,” Hiccup said resolutely, getting up *slowly* this time, “I’ll get going on Toothless right now to go find something to eat. Happy?”

“No way!” Fishlegs exclaimed as Toothless grabbed Hiccup with his teeth and pulled him back down. “You are not going anywhere. I’ll go. I don’t trust you not to ‘get distracted’ or pass out again on the way.”

Hiccup opened his mouth to object or maybe just to restore his dignity a bit, but Fishlegs cut him off. “You wait right here. Toothless, make sure he stays,“ Fishlegs said, the last sentence veering towards a teasing tone.

Hiccups rolled his eyes—*really*, using his *own dragon* against him?—but then smiled, turning to Toothless as Fishlegs flew away on Meatlug.

By the time Fishlegs returned with some bread, water, and yak-chops, the sun was almost touching the horizon. The sky was a brilliant pinkish-orange, and the waves glittered like thousands of tiny crystals. Crisp and cool, a breeze flew onto the beach, refreshing Hiccup and blowing his hair out of his face. The sand felt cool under his hands.

Except for the calming crashing of the waves and Toothless' contented little rumbles, a still and relaxing silence dominated the scene, intoxicating Hiccup with a tranquility and peacefulness long deprived from him. He made a mental note to himself to come down here more often.

"Dinner is served," Fishlegs said with a grand sweep of his arm. Hiccup picked up the plate, and Fishlegs watched as he eagerly took a few bites then abruptly paused.

"Wait, you didn't get any dinner either, right?" Hiccup asked.

"Oh, for the love of Thor, don't even think about sharing with me. I grabbed a few bites when I was getting the food."

Hiccup eyed him questioningly. "You didn't—"

"No, I didn't tell anyone anything," Fishlegs finished for him.

Hiccup nodded and went back to his food.

"It's spectacular, isn't it?"

Fishlegs looked down at Hiccup, who was now staring at the sunset.

"Yeah, who needs windows when you can experience the contemplative-ness of *this*," Fishlegs remarked, gesturing to the scene around him.

"We're still going to make those windows," Hiccup said, munching on a yak-chop.

"Yes, but we're not going to skip dinner when we do."

Hiccup laughed. Fishlegs smiled, sitting down on the sand. They sat in a friendly silence and watched the horizon together until Hiccup had finished eating and the sun had slipped out of sight.

"Thanks, Fishlegs," Hiccup said.

"No problem," he replied.

Notes:

Thanks for reading! Please leave comments and kudos if you enjoyed!

St. Benedict of Nursia, patron saint of (recovering) workaholics, pray for us!
St. Nicholas, patron saint of glassmakers, pray for us!

Until next time,
God Bless

Chapter 2 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/164774332) : Ruffnut

Notes:

Hello!

This chapter takes place at some point during S2 after E6, "The Zippleback Experience" (my favorite episode 😂), and before S2 E7, "Edge of Disaster Pt. 1".

Enjoy!

(See the end of the chapter for more notes (#chapter_2_endnotes) .)

Splat!

Another bullseye.

Ruffnut let another paint balloon fly. They weren't really balloons—just little sacks filled to the brim with paint—but they still splattered gloriously. In the darkness of the early morning, she could barely see her target, the left dragon head of the two that decorated the top of the training arena, but she knew the top of the training arena dome was going to be coated bright green in the morning.

And of course, Hiccup would blame *her* for it and make *her* scrub it off while *Tuffnut* created any chaos *he* wanted. The tyrant wouldn't even think to consider that Ruffnut had only been hurling paints at the dome *because* of her brother. If Tuffnut could've just let her sleep, she wouldn't be here, letting her anger out on the poor retractable dome. But Tuffnut had just *had* to take her blanket in the middle of the night and refuse to give it back, and Ruffnut had been *forced* to try to sleep, shivering cold and made to listen to Tuffnut's snores.

Bam!

Even from her position above the arena, Ruffnut could tell that had been a direct hit. She reached next to her; eager to let another balloon fly, but that had been the last one.

Ruffnut sighed. She considered turning around and walking back into her hut to try again to get some sleep but decided against it. She needed to do something—get some time away from her brother—and since tossing paint from her hut was not an option anymore (and really, she didn't want to get in anymore trouble), she decided unchaotically walking around Dragon's Edge was her best option.

There were still a couple hours before sunrise, so Ruffnut made her way up the ladders and stairs to the Clubhouse. Moving around warmed her up a bit, so she continued, wandering toward Snotlout's hut.

She didn't come up here that often, she realized. Of course, she came to the Clubhouse every day, but she seldom visited the others' huts. Her and her brother's hut was pretty removed from the others', and she usually only saw them from a distance.

Despite herself, she headed toward them all, admiring their details. She was on her way down to Astrid's hut when she heard a crash above her. It had come from Hiccup's hut.

Ruffnut turned around. What could that have been? Toothless did sleep there with Hiccup, so maybe he knocked something over in his sleep. Ruffnut shrugged it off and was walking away again when she heard a distinctively dragon yelp of distress.

Overcome by nothing more than curiosity, Ruffnut ran to the sound. She threw open the door of Hiccup's hut to see what could possibly be going on in there, hours before dawn.

And *oh boy*, it didn't disappoint. A struggling Hiccup Haddock was dangling from the loft of his hut, held there only by Toothless' desperate hold on the back of his shirt.

Hiccup held himself still the moment Ruffnut barged in, and from his precarious position, scrunched his face up in confusion when he saw Ruffnut staring at him in the middle of his doorway. "Ruffnut?"

Slowly, a wicked grin came over Ruffnut's face at Hiccup's curious predicament. "What are you *doing*?" she asked. It was seldom she ever got to see Hiccup so flustered and embarrassed.

"Oh, uh, just um... lost my balance," Hiccup stammered unconvincingly and then yelped when Toothless yanked him back up onto his bed. Ruffnut stared confused as Hiccup disappeared from sight and a disappointingly boring silence resumed. *Really?* Ruffnut thought, *No frenzied follow-up? No embarrassed explanation?*

Well, Ruffnut had gotten what she had come for, at least: one gloriously awkward moment. The memory of Hiccup's priceless bewildered expression and momentary quandary (however strange) would live in her mind forever. What a nice, chaotic moment at someone else's expense to brighten up her gloomy day—well, night. She started walking back outside when she felt something large take hold of her arm.

It was Toothless, grabbing her arm between his teeth.

"Hey, watch it, pal!" Ruffnut said, trying to free her arm in vain. Not only did that do nothing, but her protests couldn't even stop Toothless from pulling her away from the door. When Ruffnut resisted, Toothless gave up trying to be gentle altogether and began dragging her across the wooden floor.

"Hey!" Ruffnut yelled, "What do you think you're doing? Bad dragon! Bad drag—ow!"

Did Ruffnut just hit her head on a stair? Was Toothless dragging her up the stairs? Ruffnut was confused. But any doubt of being pulled up the stairwell vanished by the third of fourth stair and the third or fourth bruise on her head.

"Yo! Stop! That hurts!" she cried, but Toothless persisted, and Ruffnut was dragged along, her head hitting each stair he climbed. At last Ruffnut felt her arm being released and herself on even ground.

She rubbed her head as she got up, glaring at Toothless "You and I are going to have a little chat later, you hear me?"

Ruffnut looked around her. Toothless had brought her up to Hiccup's loft. *What?* Ruffnut thought to herself. "Why'd you bring me here, you big lizard?" she asked Toothless pointedly.

Toothless only rumbled sadly and looked at Hiccup, who seemed to be asleep. *Odd,* Ruffnut thought. Shouldn't Hiccup be shooing her out of his hut in the middle of the night?

Ruffnut looked down at Toothless for an answer, but he was still looking at Hiccup.

Ruffnut saw her opportunity—escape while Toothless was distracted. Slowly, slowly, she began inching away. *Now sprint!*

Ruffnut tried to flee down the stairwell but got caught by Toothless' strong grasp again.

"Hey, dragon! Let me go!" she shouted, pulling away.

"Let her go, Toothless," a barely audible voice said from the bed.

Ruffnut stopped pulling at the weak sound of Hiccup's usually commanding voice. She turned her gaze in his direction. Hiccup was now sitting up on the edge of his bed. He looked hunched over and was cradling his head in his hands. Something was definitely off.

Before she could wonder what, Toothless shoved her toward Hiccup. This time, she didn't fight back.

Closer up, Ruffnut inspected Hiccup wordlessly. He didn't look back up at her. Toothless let go of her arm and backed up expectantly. He clearly wanted her to do something. But what?

Ruffnut gave Toothless a dubious look: *what do you want me to do, bro?* To her Hiccup just seemed to be acting oddly asocial at the moment.

The Night Fury made a loud exasperated huff and lunged forward. He picked Ruffnut's arm up again and immediately applied it to Hiccup's forehead.

"Ugh!" Ruffrut exclaimed immediately, yanking her hand away from Hiccup's forehead. Then a look of confusion crossed her face. Was Hiccup's head a little warmer than usual? Ruffnut put her hand back.

Yikes, his forehead was *burning*.

Oh, *this* was why Toothless hadn't let her leave. Hiccup was sick, and he thought she could take care of him.

Hiccup moved away from her touch. "Go away, Rutfnut," he said as sternly as he could, "I'm fine."

Wow, he was still bossing her around even half-asleep and with a heck of a fever.

Ruffnut scoffed, "Yeah, as fine as the top of the training arena is right now. And I'd love to leave, really, but your dragon here's not letting me."

Toothless growled threateningly. He wasn't going to let Ruffnut leave without her doing anything.

"See?" Ruffnut motioned wildly at Toothless to Hiccup, trying to get him to understand her situation.

But Hiccup didn't even look up at her. In fact, he looked like he was ready to collapse.

"O-Okay, T" Ruffnut backed down, using her brother's nickname for the dragon, "I'll go get Fishlegs and come back to help Hiccup. I don't know how to do sick people. I don't even know how to do… Hiccup. Trust me."

Toothless seemed to ponder this and then nodded.

Ruffnut began to leave but felt a hand grab her arm.

Again? Seriously, couldn't her poor arm get a break?

"Hiccup?" Ruffnut spoke to the boy grasping her arm, "I'm just gonna go ge—"

"Don't get Fishlegs," Hiccup pleaded, locking eyes with her.

"What? Why not? I don't know if you noticed, but you're running up a temperature that would make Hookfang jealous."

"If you get Fishlegs, Astrid will find out I'm sick."

"So? Don't want your girlfriend to see you all pale and sickly?" Ruffnut unhelpfully surmised.

"Astrid's going to Berk today to see her family and the new house they built. If she finds out I'm sick, she'll worry about me and stay behind. Please don't tell anyone, Ruff," Hiccup clumsily explained, his voice cracking.

"You're in no place to bargain right now," Ruffnut said, chuckling at the pathetic state Hiccup was in.

"Please, Ruff," Hiccup begged.

No way Ruffnut was letting Hiccup get his way in his condition. Sure the Hookfang thing had been a stretch, but Hiccup's condition was bad, even Ruffnut could tell. And a Viking being sick was always serious, especially, it seemed, when that Viking was Hiccup.

But when Ruffnut looked down and saw green eyes staring back at her, she didn't see the green eyes that belonged to Hiccup, the fearless tyrant of the Edge, but the eyes that belonged to Hiccup, the fishbone, the Runt of Berk, who only wanted to be accepted by his tribe and strong enough to help out in any way he could. This was the Hiccup who was pleading with her to ignore his current illness and his needs. And, no matter how irrational it was, Ruffnut couldn't help but give in.

Ruffnut dropped her gaze. "Fine, " she relented, "but if you die, it's your fault."

She glanced back down to see if he understood, but he was asleep again.

"Oh, brother," she sighed. Aware of the Night Fury behind her, Ruffnut did the only thing she could think to do and covered Hiccup with his blanket. Wait—wouldn't that make his temperature go even higher?"

Ruffnut snatched the blanket away and groaned in frustration, "Ugh, what am I supposed to do? Stupid Hiccup, stupid Tuffnut, stupid you." she snapped, looking daggers at Toothless.

But even Toothless provided no help; he lay sadly on his stone, almost like he had given up. He wouldn't stop Ruffnut from leaving now.

But Ruffnut realized she *didn't* want to leave. This hut was a good hideout. The sun would rise soon, and Tuffnut would look for her. She was still mad and didn't want to be found, and he would never think to look for her in Hiccup's hut. And plus, staying here would give her an oppontunity to do something. She found she couldn't just ignore Hiccup; she couldn't just stand around and be useless—that wasn't her style. Even if it made Hiccup worse somehow, she had to do something.

"Hey" Ruffnut said to the miserably resigned dragon lying nearby, "I'll be right back. I'm gonna go find something to help Hiccup. Hopefully. Um, yeah. Bye." Ruffnut descended the stairs and went outside.

Alright, time to brainstorm. What did people do when people were sick?

Her first idea was to run around, concocting various random wild cures. That's what she and her brother would do. That wouldn't work.

What would Fishlegs do? He had all those notes about herbs; he would probably find the perfect one and steep it in some tea that would work like a charm. But Ruffnut didn't know anything about herbs, and she didn't want to poison Hiccup. In fact, her attempts wouldn't look much different than her first idea.

Hmmm… but what would Hiccup do? Ruffnut had never seen Hiccup take care of a sick person before because if someone was sick, that meant Hiccup would have probably been sick too. But there was that time he had punched Snotlout. Snotlout hadn't been sick, but he had been hurt, and Hiccup had immediately told the twins to get ice and applied it to Snotlout's jaw.

Well, Hiccup's jaw wasn't hurting, but his forehead was too hot. Maybe putting ice on it would cool it down?

That was good enough for Ruffnut. In a few minutes, she was holding a hexagonal prism off ice on Hiccup's forehead. After a while her hand got cold and Ruffnut assumed Hiccup's head might get too cold too, so she took a piece of cloth and wrapped it around the ice. Soon, the ice melted, and she was left holding just the wet cloth.

Well, she was doing something, so hurray.

An hour later, sunlight began seeping into the hut by the crack under Hiccup's door. It wasn't long before he finally woke up.

"Hey," he said, "you're still here."

"Yep," she said nonchalantly, "not because I care, of course. I need you to tell me what to say when Astrid comes looking for you before she leaves."

"I don't know, just try getting her to leave without seeing me." Hiccup unhelpfully said.

"That's easier said than done." Ruffnut remarked, but inside her spirit soared. Hiccup gave her nothing to say in particular, so she had the freedom to have as much fun as she wanted.

"You'll figure it out," Hiccup assured her.

"Oh, yes I will."

* * *

"Ruffnut, what are you doing in front of Hiccup's hut?" Astrid fiercely inquired. Stormfly was behind her, saddled and ready to depart for Berk.

"Well, hello there, Astrid. Good morning to you too;" Ruffnut greeted with a casual lift to her voice. "I'm here to see you off. Hiccup went on a morning flight around the island, and he told me stand here and see you off for him." Ruffnut replied, standing confidently with her arms behind her back.

"Oh." Astrid seemed to deflate a little. She looked past the hut to the rest of the island determinedley. "Well, I'll go find him, so he can see me off himself." She started mounting Stormfly.

Oh no you don't, Ruffnut thought. When Astrid wouldn't find Hiccup, she'd know Ruffnut had been lying and would find out Hiccup was sick. Ruffnut couldn't let all her work be for nothing. She had to get Astrid off the island now.

Pretending to act incredulous, she asked before Astrid could fly off, "What? Why? Is me seeing you off not good enough for you? Or can you just not stand to leave without your boyfriend giving you a few goodbye kisses?"

That did it. Astrid's face turned a bright pink. Ruffnut didn't know if it was a blush or rage. Ruffnut thought it was rage.

"He's not my-" she stated furiously (yep, rage) "oh whatever. You're right. I *don't* need Hiccup to see me off. Goodbye."

Without waiting for an answer from Ruffnut, she mounted Stormfly and sped away.

Ruffnut grinned. Get Astrid to leave without seeing Hiccup? Check. Embarrass and fluster her as a bonus? Check. Mission accomplished.

Ruffnut walked proudly back into Hiccup's hut. "Crisis averted," she reported.

"Great," Hiccup replied from his bed, "athough I don't remember asking you to lie to her."

Ruffnut made her way up the stairs. Hiccup must have heard the whole thing. "Well I don't remember you asking me *not* to lie to her."

Hiccup gave a faint chuckle as Ruffnut adjusted the cloth on his forehead. A few moments passed.

"For the record, I'm not Astrid's boyfriend."

"Sure, dragon boy," Ruffnut said, "you're the only one she even respects. She would never even think to stay behind if any of us were sick. We have to *earn* her respect. You've always had it."

"Not always," Hiccup commented plainly.

Ruffnut looked away from Hiccup. It wasn't often that he brought up the time before the Red Death. She felt bad for dismissing it so easily.

Hiccup saw her regret and readily changed the subject. "You know, I was wondering…" he began, "why were you up so early today?"

Up early? Oh, right. That seemed like so long ago. Ruffnut was happy to reply. "What can I say? Brothers are annoying. You're lucky you don't have one."

Hiccup gave a shallow laugh. "Oh, and… what was that you said about the training arena?"

Huh? Ruffnut thought. When had she said anything about the training arena? Oh, right, she had said something about its sad condition when she had first talked to Hiccup that morning. She had thought Hiccup was too feverish to remember! Was there anything he didn't hear?

"What can I say? Brothers are annoying," she repeated, "I had to take my anger out on something!"

Hiccup gave her a quizzical look; he seemed scared that Ruffnut had somehow destroyed the whole thing.

"It's just covered in paint, you idiot. I'll scrub it off later today." Ruffnut grumbled, looking at the floor.

"Don't worry about it, Ruff," Hiccup said, "I'll scrub it off."

Ruffnut jerked her head up, surprised. "What?"

"I'll take care of it. Think of it as recompense for you taking care of me," Hiccup remarked.

Taking care of him? Ruffnut hadn't done that. She had just done what she had been forced to do. Well, had she been forced to, really? Had she really done something caring out of the kindness of her heart? The idea made her sick. She decided not to dwell on it.

"Ha! Serves you right for not taking care of yourself a little bit more!" she shouted. Then she added, "If you really want to make recompense, you should make Tuffnut help you too."

"I just might," he commented, closing his eyes. "Thanks, Ruff. I feel a bit better now. You can go, now, if you want."

Ruffnut considered it. Yes, she should let Hiccup sleep. After checking his temperature one more time to make sure he hadn't been lying to her, (yes, his head was a bit cooler than last time), Ruffnut got up to go.

Toothless nuzzled her gratefully as she went by. "Bye, you stupid dragon," she said, climbing down the stairs. She'd be back soon, nevertheless, with Fishlegs this time, to do the job right.

What was a tyrant? Someone who orders people around. But what sort of tyrant disregards his own health for the sake of others? A stupid one, she thought.

Stupid Hiccup.

Notes:

😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Thanks for reading! Please don't forget to leave comments and kudos if you want to!

St. Bernadette, patron saint of the sick, pray for us!

Until next time,
God Bless

Chapter 3 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/165003157): Snotlout

Notes:

Hello!

This chapter is going to be a little different than the other ones so far. I included a bit of Astrid and Fishlegs instead of focusing just on Hiccup and Snotlout, and the structure of it is pretty different.

This chapter includes a bit of violence and a brief description of an injury.

I hope you enjoy!

(See the end of the chapter for more notes (#chapter_3_endnotes).)

"Another boring old island patrol!" Snotlout complained, throwing his arms up in frustration.

He and Hiccup were patrolling the nearby islands. Snotlout hated going on patrol with Hiccup. Patrols with him were so long because he insisted on being thorough and checking out everything, even weird-looking trees. They had been at it for over two hours now and hadn't seen anything even remotely out of the ordinary.

"Nothing but water for miles and miles and then a boring, empty island!" Snotlout ranted, "Why do we even go through the hassle of flying this far if there's never ever gonna be a-oh." Snotlout quieted himselt as a Dragon Hunter ship came into view around the island.

"You were saying?" Hiccup smugly replied, slowing down Toothless. Both Hookfang and Toothless veered to hide behind a patch of trees as Hiccup brought out his spyglass.

"There are some Dragon Hunters on the beach," Hiccup reported, looking through his spyglass, "looks like a small scouting crew. Small ships, minimal weapons, though I can't see much from here."

"Great! "Snotlout said emphatically, "let's blow them all into oblivion and go home."

"No, Snotlout," Hiccup responded, still peering through his spyglass, "we don't want to hurt anyone if we don't have to. Besides, we should figure out what they're doing here first. It might give us a strategic advantage against Viggo in the future."

Snotlout rolled his eyes. He hated how cautious and diligent Hiccup was sometimes. "You know what *else* would give us a strategic advantage? *Eliminating* some of Viggo's men so they won't *kill us* in the future! *Every* Dragon Hunter is bad news. Why shouldn't we take from their numbers now? We don't have to hurt them; we can just shoo them away."

"Snotlout, even if that were true, we shouldn't attack a random crew of Dragon Hunters without preparation. We have no idea what the consequences could be. I don't even know if we could take them by ourselves."

"You said there were only small ships!" Snotlout shouted.

"Quiet!" Hiccup scolded, "I can only *see* small ships, but *maybe* there's one hiding behind that rock..."

"Oh, for the love of Thor!" Snotlout yelled, speeding with Hookfang out of their hiding place into open air.

"Snotlout! What are you doing?" Hiccup exclaimed.

Snotlout ignored him. He was tired of Hiccup's caution and planning. Here was an open opportunity to mess up whatever the Dragon Hunter army was doing, and Hiccup wanted to settle for later. *Jorgensons don't settle when there's glory to be had.* Snotlout could nearly hear his father's voice in his head.

A wicked grin crossed Snotlout's face as surprised Dragon Hunters fled from the shoreline back to their ships at the sight of him and Hookfang. Hiccup had been right. The ships were small, and, (Snotlout noted with pride), there were no ships beyond the large rock Hiccup must have been speaking of.

A few of the Hunters fired arrows at him as they fled, but Snotlout dodged them with ease. Hookfang sent fire over the length of the beach, forcing the Hunters to retreat, and Snotlout sent words.

"That's right lousy dragon hunters!" he taunted, "go sail on your lousy ships back to whatever lousy hole you crept out of!"

"Snotlout!" Hiccup shouted, flying toward Snotlout. Toothless sent a few plasma blasts at incoming arrows seconds away from hitting Snotlout. He didn't notice.

The Dragon Hunters were paddling away from the shoreline now. A few Dragon Hunters paused their commotion, realizing the head Dragon Rider and his Nignt Fury had appeared. Snotlout didn't let them dawdle.

"Get out of here, muttonheads! And give my regards to Viggo!" Snotlout yelled, flying after them. He and Hookfang spewed fire in their direction again until the ships were retreating at a very high speed. He waited a few seconds to watch their cowardly escape.

Turning around, Snotlout, with a proud grin, returned back to where Hiccup and Toothless were hovering over the island. "And you thought I couldn't take the—"

"Snotlout!" Hiccup interrupted Snotlout irately, "what were you thinking? That was the absolute dumbest thing you could have done."

"What do you mean?" Snotlout asked incredulously, "I made them retreat! I took care of them!"

"Took care of them? You led an ambush against a Dragon Hunter squad single-handedly without any sort of strategy. You're lucky you didn't get killed!" Hiccup yelled, exasperated.

Now Snotlout was just as angry. "You think I couldn't handle those guys? It was easy. Look! They're all retreating!" Snotlout gestured to his right at the ships. Neither boy actually looked; they were too deep in their argument. If they had looked, Snotlout's stance would have been made void; the Dragon Hunter ships were not retreating but slowly approaching the two distracted teenagers hovering in midair. On deck, two Hunters were carefully aiming a catapult loaded with a boulder.

"Yes, you handled them, Snotlout, but you didn't *know* you could. You had *no* way of knowing what you were up against!"

"I did know I could!" Snotlout retorted, "I could tell from what you said that they were defenseless."

“Defenseless? I said ‘minimal weapons’, not none! I barely told you anything! How could you have possibly put together that you would be able to handle it? You can’t just put yourself in unknown danger like that!”

“You’re not the only one with a brain here,” Snotlout retorted, “I decided to take a risk. I would have turned back if I had to. You take risks all the time! How come if you have an idea and you know it’s going to work, you get to do it, but I can’t?”

“Snotlout, I—“ Hiccup was interrupted by a the raucous sound of a wooden catapult being launched.

Both Riders instantly turned their heads toward the sound in time to see an enormous stone soaring directly toward them. It veered toward Snotlout.

“Snotlout!” Hiccup cried, automatically throwing himself and Toothless in front of him.

The boulder impacted Hiccup’s body with a sickening blow. Toothless screeched as Hiccup was flung off Toothless’ saddle and fell toward the large rock on the beach.

“Hiccup!” Snotlout cried, his voice cracking with distress, “Hookfang, dive!”

Snotlout and Hookfang sliced through the air, trying to reach the injured boy. They were too late. Hiccup’s still body impacted the sandy ground and rolled over a few times before Snotlout could get close enough to grab him. Toothless glided safely to a landing nearby.

“Oh, Hiccup, man, I’m sorry,” Snotlout whimpered, dismounting Hookfang and running toward Hiccup. He knew Hiccup couldn’t hear him, and from a very brief look over him, Snotlout knew he wouldn’t be hearing anything for a while.

On his forehead was a bloody gash, and along his armor Snotlout could see multiple spots of rocky dust, bound to have bruised ribs underneath. He rushed over to pick up Hiccup’s wrist, fearing the worst. To his eternal gratitude, he felt a pulse.

“Oh, thank Thor,” he sighed, putting Hiccup’s wrist down gently.

Toothless soon arrived and shoved Snotlout out of the way. He sniffed Hiccup over and licked Hiccup’s motionless face. He tried again and again, and when that didn’t work, he glared at Snotlout and huffed with narrowed eyes.

“I know, I know. I’m sorry, Toothless,” Snotlout apologized, holding up his hands. He bent down to inspect Hiccup, to help him in any way he could. But then he heard the sound of waves crashing on wood. “Oh no.”

The Dragon Hunter ships were heading to the shore. They seemed to be going twice as fast as they had been before. This was bad. This was very, very bad.

This was all his fault. Why couldn’t he have listened to Hiccup? Why did he have to expose himself to the Hunters and expose Hiccup too by arguing with him? Why couldn’t he have turned his head to make *sure* the Hunters were retreating and not sneaking up on them? Now Hiccup was helpless, Toothless was grounded, and certain doom approaching like a torrent. None of this would’ve happened if he had just listened to Hiccup!

Snotlout assessed the situation. He and Hookfang could fly away, no problem. Snotlout could even take Hiccup with him, but that would leave Toothless. If Snotlout wanted to save both of them, he would have to fly Toothless.

Snotlout knew it could be done. Astrid could fly Toothless; Hiccup had taught her how to. Snotlout would have to figure it out himself.

“Ok, Toothless, don’t worry, I’m gonna get us out of here,” Snotlout said, inching toward Toothless, “you just have to let me ride you, ok?”

Snotlout didn’t wait for an answer. He jumped on Toothless’ back. Toothless grumbled but didn’t shake him off. The ships were getting closer.

“Ok, ok,” Snotlout muttered to himself, looking down at the devices and pedals, “my leg goes here, right?” Snotlout tried to fit his foot into a pedal-looking space; it didn’t fit.

“Ok, um, how to do this…” Snotlout rambled as he fiddled with the mechanisms. He could hear the shouts of the Dragon Hunters now. Hookfang’s concerned warbles telling him to hurry did nothing to help him relax.

Finally, Snotlout got his foot to slide into what he thought was the right spot. “Now what?” he cried nervously. He tried moving his foot around at different angles, but nothing opened Toothless’ fin. An arrow bounced off the ground in front of him. They were in shooting range now.

“Oh, you muttonhead!” Snotlout yelled at Hiccup’s form on the ground, “why did you save me? Why would you save the guy with a dragon that can *actually fly*? That wasn’t very *strategic* of you!”

Suddenly, Snotlout’s foot sank lower into Toothless’ mechanism and Toothless’ tail opened. Without a moment for celebration, Snotlout leaned toward the ground, scooped up Hiccup as gently and as quickly as he could and held on as Hookfang and Toothless launched themselves to the sky.

All Snotlout could do on the long way back to the Edge was focus on keeping Toothless’ tail open and keeping a secure hold on Hiccup. He hadn’t stirred the entire time, and Snotlout didn’t dare to try anything that could aggravate his condition further except for wiping a bit of blood off his forehead.

At last, the Edge came into view. Before they were even over land Snotlout began to call out, “Astrid! Fishlegs!” When neither of them appeared, Snotlout sent Hookfang to get Fishlegs and continued toward Hiccup’s hut.

When Toothless arrived at Hiccup’s hut, Astrid was bursting out of her own. Gasping at what she saw, she sprinted up to Hiccup’s hut to meet them.

“What happened?” she asked breathlessly. She stumbled when she saw Hiccup closer up.

“We met some Dragon Hunters on patrol.” Snotlout carefully dismounted Toothless, (good thing he was much closer to the ground than Hookfang), and set Hiccup gently on the ground.

Before he could explain further, Fishlegs and Meatlug slid to a messy landing near Astrid. “Oh my Thor,” he said, running to Hiccup’s side, “what happened to him?”

“Dragon Hunters,” Astrid bluntly answered.

“He was hit by a boulder and fell off Toothless,” Snotlout explained.

“Fishlegs, we should get Hiccup to his bed,” Astrid remarked before Snotlout could respond.

“Agreed,” Fishlegs said, “come on, help me lift him up.”

Snotlout and Toothless silently followed as the two moved Hiccup up to his bed and began treating him. Astrid began taking off Hiccup’s armor, and Fishlegs produced a roll of bandages out of seemingly nowhere.

All Snotlout did was watch.

The entire time Fishlegs and Astrid fussed over and diagnosed Hiccup’s injuries, Snotlout stayed. He didn’t leave when they began wrapping his head up in bandages; he didn’t leave after they had finished. He stood so silently he was sure Fishlegs and Astrid forgot he was even there.

Not long after, Fishlegs, thinking Hiccup would wake up in the next half hour, went to retrieve some willow bark tea from his hut. Astrid was sitting at Hiccup’s side, adjusting some of the bandages. It wasn’t until she knocked over a cup that she seemed to remember Snotlout was standing in the corner. She looked at him, slightly confused.

“You can leave now, Snotlout,” she commented, “we’ve got this covered.”

“Thanks, I think I’ll stay,” Snotlout replied plainly.

Astrid’s brow furrowed at his response. Then her face lit up as she realized something. “You flew Toothless back here,” she said in wonder.

“Yeah,” was all that Snotlout said.

After a while Astrid gave a little nod then returned to tending to Hiccup. A few moments later she spoke. “He got beat up pretty bad. He’s lucky you were there.”

Snotlout pinched himself. Did Astrid just thank him? Little did she know *he* was the reason Hiccup even got hurt.

Presently, Fishlegs returned with the tea. It wasn’t long before Hiccup’s eyes slowly opened.

“Hiccup?” Astrid asked.

“Snotlout,” Hiccup uttered dazedly.

Fishlegs and Astrid looked surprised at Snotlout, who was the most surprised of them all at hearing his name.

“I’m here, Hiccup,” Snotlout said, stepping forward, “I’m here.”

Hiccup’s eyes focused, and he looked at Snotlout. “Good,” he said. He smiled faintly at Fishlegs and Astrid. Suddenly alert, he asked, “Where’s Toothless?”

Before any of them could reply, Toothless pounced on the bed and was drenching Hiccup’s bandages with saliva. Hiccup couldn’t contain his laughter. “I’m glad to see you too, bud!” Toothless didn’t stop. “Hey, that’s a bit excessive, don’t you think?”

Eventually, Toothless stopped licking Hiccup’s face, and Hiccup was able to address his friends. “How? How did you get him back here?” he asked, amazed.

“Snotlout rode him back with you about an hour ago,” Astrid explained.

“He said the Dragon Hunters hit you with a boulder. To say it’ll take a while for you to recover is an understatement.” Fishlegs explained. “Must have been quite an impressive shot,” he remarked.

Hiccup looked at them both, a bit puzzled..

Snotlout prepared himself for his fate. Hiccup would explain how he had been injured, and all three of them would dislike him even more.

But Hiccup just chuckled,. “Yeah, *insanely* lucky shot,” he lied, then turned to Snotlout, “you really flew Toothless all the way back?”

“Yeah,” Snotlout said, confidently crossing his arms. He didn’t know why he was putting on this false impression, but he was.

Their conversation gradually became orders toward Hiccup on what he would have to do to heal. Seeing that Hiccup was okay and didn’t seem to want to talk about what had happened with the Hunters, (why else would he have shrugged it off like that?), Snotlout quietly left the others to it.

That night, as everyone was winding down for bed, Snotlout visited Hiccup's hut.

"Snotlout?" Hiccup asked, still lying in bed. Fishlegs had ordered him to stay in bed that night, much to the annoyance of Hiccup.

Snotlout climbed up to his loft. "Hiccup, I'm sorry," he said, "It was all my fault—I know it was. I shouldn't have gone and attacked the Dragon Hunters all by myself, and I should have listened to you."

Hiccup looked up at him. "Snotlout, it's ok," he said, "it's all good."

"No it's not! You're only lying there, bandaged and bruised, because of me. That wasn't just a 'lucky shot'. I'm the one who got the Hunters' attention. I'm the one who should be hurt."

"That's not true. I chose to get hit by that boulder."

"Ha! And that was stupid. Not very *strategic* of you." Snotlout rebuked Hiccup despite his attempts at apology. He was still mad Hiccup had saved him.

But Hiccup just heaved a funny sigh. "Yeah, you're right. Really—you're right. I'm a hypocrite. You know, I've been thinking about what happened. I shouldn't have gotten so mad at your actions just because they weren't mine. I do a lot of reckless and stupid things too. I mean, I *am* the one here swaddled in bandages."

If Snotlout had heard this admission that afternoon, he would have been overjoyed, but, alas, he just had to be festering in guilt."It was still my fault for trying to handle it all by myself," he confessed, "you do reckless things for the sake of others—I only do them for me."

"And that's totally untrue," Hiccup declared, "Snotlout, you saved my life. You rode Toothless all the way back here. You could have left me to die and gotten out of there so much easier. If it was your fault I got hurt, (and it wasn't), you undoubtedly made up for it. But in case you need to hear this: Snotlout, I forgive you. Just try to find it in you to forgive yourself."

Snotlout took a deep breath, trying to release the tension in his body. He still didn't feel all good and right inside, but he could try to forgive himself. "Alright, I'll do my best. If you had died, though, I would've never forgiven myself."

"Well, I didn't die, thanks to you," Hiccup replied, "thanks Snotlout, for everything."

Snotlout crossed his arms and tilted up his head haughtily, both he and Hiccup knowing it was just a fabricated show of confidence. "You're welcome, Hiccup the Hypocritical."

Notes:

That's it for today! Thanks for reading and don't forget to leave comments and kudos!

Next up: Tuffnut

St. John Licci, patron saint of head injuries, pray for us!

Until next time,
God Bless.

Chapter 4 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/165188212) : Tuffnut

Notes:

Hello, again!

This chapter contains some violence, just to let you all know.

Enjoy!

(See the end of the chapter for more notes (#chapter_4_endnotes) .)

"Oh! This is perfect!" Tuffnut brandished a rusty metal rod.

"Tuff, that's an old metal rod; I could make a much better one in the forge." Hiccup remarked.

"Oh, my poor, little, ignorant Hiccup," Tuffnut replied, "everyone knows things bought from a market carry much more practicality and prestige than any shiny homemade product."

Hiccup turned his gaze from a vendor stand to Tuffnut, confused. Really, an antique from the shady Northern Markets was superior to a new device designed in the forge? He decided to shrug it off. Part of him was glad that Tuffnut had found

a present for Ruffnut so quickly. He had been afraid letting Tuffnut come along would slow him down. But, now all Hiccup had to do was find some pieces for Inferno, and they could leave.

Even so, he couldn't help but wonder at Tuffnut's selection. "And Ruffnut needs a metal rod for her birthday because…" he prompted questioningly.

"Hey, H, I know what I'm doing. It might not look like much, but I know a good birthday gift for my sister when I see one. I *was* born on her birthday, after all." Tuffnut continued with a grandiose tone and a regal wave of his free hand, "Indeed, even amidst all the cacophony of the Northern Markets, Tuffnut LaVerne Thorston can pick out the faintest chime." He dropped his grandiosity. "That made sense, right?"

"Sure, Tuff," Hiccup replied, "though usually chimes are not so brittle with rust that they break when you hit them."

"Au contraire, mon frere, this metal rod will pack a glorious wallop, and it will create even better tales than it does the wallops!" Tuffnut responded excitedly, "if Ruffnut had been using this rod her entire life instead of that axe you made of Gronkle Iron, she would have much better stories to tell. Unfortunately, she used that glossy axe when she knocked that Dragon Hunter out cold last week. It was quite a spectacle. What a mighty swing of her arm! What a triumphant downfall! To such glorious effect! It would have been a story fit for the very Halls of Valhalla had it not been for what he said when he woke up."

"Why? What did he say?"

"He said, 'what happened?" Tuffnut answered, shaking his head.

"And… why does that matter to you?" Hiccup inquired, puzzled.

"It's so unoriginal. Talk about a failure of imagination! *Everyone* says that when they wake up. Everyone! *No one* says anything else. It's such a damper on the drama! Such a sad end to a tale! Why can't anyone just take the time to say something a little less obvious? Maybe something like, 'what *has* happened', or 'what has *transpired*,' or, 'what has begun under the sun?' Hey, that rhymes! What if every time someone woke up, they recited a poem? That would be a worthy conclusion to a story."

"Mhm, sure, yep," Tuffnut had lost Hiccup a while ago. He had learned that it was sometimes better to only half-listen to Tuffnut's rants. Meticulously, Hiccup selected a few things from a display and moved toward the owner.

"Anyway, hopefully this rod will inspire her victims to be a little less boring," Tuffnut continued, twirling the rod in front of him, "I'll wrap it up as soon as we get back. Hey, did you get what you came for?"

"Yep," Hiccup said, plopping some gold into the vendor's hand. "Let's get back to our dragons." Hiccup turned away and began walking back the way they had come and where they had left Barf, Belch, and Toothless.

"Poor BBT," Tuffnut sighed, beginning to follow Hiccup, "they're probably missing us while we shop to our hearts' content."

Hiccup led Tuffnut through an alley. "Well, we couldn't have just walked around with them either. The Dragon Hunters are everywhere, Tuff," he remarked, stepping out of the alley, "walking around with dragons is like challenging them to a fight. Some people wouldn't even hesitate to—did you hear that?" Hiccup whipped around in Tuffnut's direction.

"Hear what?" Tuffnut asked, turning around too. The alley was empty. He spun back to face Hiccup. "I don't see anythi—*H*!"

His warning was too late. An enormous Dragon Hunter stepped up behind Hiccup while he was distracted and whammed his club against his head. Hiccup collapsed to his side and was still.

Turned out, they didn't need dragons at their side to be targeted; Hiccup's prosthetic was identification enough.

The Hunter gruffly laughed over the fallen Dragon Rider. "Yo, boys!" he hollered, raising his hand to his mouth and looking to his side, "come and see my latest conquest!"

Once he had summoned his allies and they were running over, the giant Hunter began advancing menacingly toward the boy on the ground. Just then, an ear-piercing howl split the atmosphere.

"Huh?" The confused Hunter looked down the alley to behold—well, what was it? A teenage boy with long blond hair—legs spread apart and bent, leaning back, arms stretched above his head, two hands brandishing a rusty metal rod—shrieking at the top of his lungs.

Anyone who knew Tuffnut Thorston would know it was a full-fledged battle cry; anyone who knew Tuffnut Thorston would know to run away as fast as he could. Unfortunately for this Dragon Hunter, he did not know Tuffnut Thorston.

In seconds the perplexed Hunter was demolished with a mighty punch. His allies came rushing in one by one, surrounding their common enemy. But the conqueror was not done yet. He leapt to Hiccup's side, and as each of the Hunters made a move, the frenzied boy dealt each a fierce blow in defense of the boy at his feet.

With a hoot he tackled one; with a whoop he kicked another. He laughed berserkly, thwapping two with the rod at once. One tried to drag Hiccup away while Tuffnut was distracted; his wrist was stomped on and his ribs booted.

He kicked them—he tackled them—he pummeled their paper jaws. One by one they toppled in a ring around the Thorston until there was only one left. With a vigorous swing, Tuffnut squeezed his eyes shut and thwacked him with the

rod.

Sudden silence descended around the alley. The only sound was that of Tuffnut's panting. Presently, he heard a groan.

Still holding the rod, Tuffnut knelt down by his fallen leader. Gradually, Hiccup came to.

"Hey, H, you good?" Tuffnut asked.

Hiccup's eyes surveyed the unconscious Dragon Hunters by his head with a befuddled expression. "What ha—" he paused when he saw Tuffnut, "…*as occurred*?"

"Nothing much, my one-legged friend," Tuffnut replied as Hiccup sat up, "a Hunter got the jump on you, called over some of his Hunter buddies, and I vanquished them one and all." He closed his eyes and ceremoniously displayed the metal rod. "This rod here proved quite the legendary weapon; I—" Tuffnut paused as he opened his eyes. The rod was broken in half, split apart by the last blow he had dealt.

Hiccup stood up shakily and picked up the other half. The pieces were too rusty to weld back together. "Let's go get another one," Hiccup said, turning back. Dizzily, he tripped on a stone and almost tumbled before he could take a step. Tuffnut reached out and steadied him.

"Nah, Hiccup. Let's go find our dragons." Tuffnut began leading Hiccup away from the alley, letting him steady himself with him. "I'll find something even more perfectly perfect for Ruff."

"But, Tuff, I—"

"It's fine, H. The dragons are probably dying to know what happened to us anyway since they heard my battle cry."

"Your what?"

Suddenly Toothless and Barf and Belch sprang out of the bushes in front of them, teeth bared. They eased once they saw the Riders. Toothless immediately moved toward Hiccup, crooning worriedly.

"I'm alright, bud. We just ran into some Hunters." Hiccup assured his dragon.

"Yeah, literally!" Tuffnut added, already seated on Belch.

Hiccup climbed onto Toothless' back. In a few seconds, they were in the air.

"Hey, H, that bruise isn't looking too good," Tuffnut said, inspecting Hiccup, "should we find some ice or something?"

"If we find ice for me, we're going back and getting another gift for you to get Ruff." Hiccup demanded.

"Nope, nuh uh. I believe I'm the most fit to call the shots at the moment, thank you very much!" Tuffnut asserted. "You're the one who shouldn't even be flying right now in your condition, much less journeying into what is now enemy territory. We're not going anywhere unless I deem it helpful to you."

Hiccup sighed at Tuffnut's determination. "That's okay, Tuff. I'd much rather just get back to the Edge as soon as possible."

"Ooh, please let me be the one to tell the story to everyone!" Tuffnut pleaded excitedly.

"Sure. Just don't leave out the part that I very originally said 'what has occurred' instead of the very unoriginal 'what happened'."

"Certainly, my fearless leader. That was quite the creative utterance."

"Ok… thanks, Tuff. And thanks for… well, whatever you did."

"No sweat, H, it was nothing. Chicken will be proud."

Notes:

Well, that's it for today! (Sorry if it felt a bit short)

Next up: Astrid!

Don't forget to leave comments and kudos!

St. Michael the Archangel, patron saint of the attacked, pray for us!

Until next time,

God Bless

Chapter 5 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/165345316) : Astrid

Notes:

Hi, y'all!

(Disclaimer: Don't take this fic as an accurate representation of what phantom pains are like. I barely know anything about them; I sorta made it up as I went along)

Happy reading!

(See the end of the chapter for more notes (#chapter_5_endnotes) .)

Hiccup was thankful.

He was thankful Astrid had agreed to come by and check out his newest modifications on Inferno; he was thankful she had stayed afterward to chat. Sure, his missing leg was somehow hurting again, but conversing with someone always seemed to help distract him from phantom pains.

But now Hiccup's contentment was wearing thin. The pain in his missing leg was increasing—he knew it wouldn't be long before it became excruciating. What a pity; he and Astrid were having such a good time. It was seldom that they ever got a quiet moment alone.

Maybe he could pull through tonight. Maybe he could handle the pain. He could disguise his gasps as laughs and his winces as smiles, right?

One spontaneous stab of pain proved him wrong.

Hiccup couldn't help but grunt and grind his teeth. Luckily, Astrid had been laughing too hard to notice. He had to get alone *now*. He knew it wouldn't be long before he was drowning in agony.

Would it be so bad if he told Astrid he was hurting? In the past she had ordered him to let her know when he needed help. But what good would that do? The night would be a lot easier for him, but a lot more inconvenient for her. Besides, Hiccup had Toothless if anything went wrong, and he saw no need to make this a bad night for Astrid too.

So, he tried to let out a convincing yawn."Well, I think I'll turn in for the night now," he said, as casually as he could, "thanks for stopping by."

Astrid's smile slowly faded as she registered Hiccup's words. She examined Hiccup closely. "Are you alright?" she asked.

Hiccup groaned inwardly. *How was Astrid so good at reading him?* This was going to be harder than he thought.

"Yeah," he lied, trying his best to smile and remain stoic, "it's just been a really long day."

He must have done a good job, because Astrid deflated, dropping her gaze. "Oh, yeah, ok. Um, see you tomorrow." She responded, trying to sound just as casual and pretending not to notice the abruptness of Hiccup's farewell. She began to leave.

Her feigned indifference wasn't lost on Hiccup, however; he could read her like a book too. He could've kicked himself. He hadn't meant to come across so cold and unfeeling.

He walked after her. "Uh, but-I can walk you back to your hut," he stammered clumsily, trying to soften his brusqueness.

Astrid turned to face him. "Ok, um, thanks, Hiccup. I'd like that," she replied with a smile.

After bidding a brief goodbye to Toothless, the couple began walking at a leisurely pace across the wooden bridge that led to Astrid's hut. Within the first moments, Hiccup knew it had been a bad idea. Every step on his prosthetic seemed to add more and more heat to the fire that was crawling up his leg. To avoid suspicion, he strolled just a tiny bit behind Astrid—not too far for her to wonder why, not too close for her to notice his limp.

He tried to concentrate on what Astrid was saying. She was chatting about her plans for a new axe-throwing drill, or something like that. Why did everything sound like he was trapped underwater? Hiccup tried not to focus on that. *Just focus on following Astrid, one step at a time,* he told himself.

All of a sudden, it didn't feel like he was just underwater anymore. It felt like he was in that diving bell again—surrounded by the noise of rushing water and unable to breathe. He thought he had stopped walking.

He wanted to tell Astrid he hadn't heard a thing she had said, but he knew addressing her would make her turn and see the condition he was in. Even so, he knew it was silly to try to hide it from her now. He could feel his senses being taken away from him. He needed help. *Oh, Thor,* why was he such a muttonhead?

"A-Astrid," he croaked out.

Astrid stopped speaking and turned rapidly at the tone of Hiccup's voice. She gasped when she beheld Hiccup's pale, contorted face. She barely had time to get a hold of herself before Hiccup's eyes rolled to the back of his head, and he went limp, swaying over the edge of the bridge.

"Hiccup!" she cried, lunging for him. Just barely, she was able to grab his arm and yank him back to solid ground. She guided him gently to the floor, letting his head rest on her lap.

Astrid scanned him hastily, looking for anything wrong. She couldn't find anything out of the ordinary. "Come on, Hiccup," she begged, gently shaking him, "wake up."

As if on cue, Hiccup began to grimace, and his eyes slowly blinked open. “Sorry, Astrid,” he murmured.

“Don’t you dare apologize, Haddock. What’s wrong?”

Hiccup gave a little gasp of pain then slowly nodded toward his leg.

“Seriously? Your leg?” she asked, dumbfounded. Astrid was familiar with the concept of phantom pain; she knew it could have sprouted up out of nowhere just then. “How long has it been hurting? You’re just telling me now?” Astrid interrogated Hiccup, practically yelling. “You thought it was a good idea to *walk* me back to my hut over a *narrow wooden bridge* when your leg was hurting? You’re supposed to tell me when you need my help, Hiccup! We talked about this!”

Astrid glared at Hiccup and waited for an answer. Hiccup just stared back up at her.

“Well?” she prompted.

“You told me not to apologize,” Hiccup replied.

“Oh my Thor,” Astrid sighed, dropping Hiccup and standing up. *Boys,* she thought.

Below her, Hiccup was smiling as he slowly lifted his head off the ground and sat himself up.

Astrid rolled her eyes and then smiled back. “You okay?” she asked, leaning down to his level in a teasingly condescending way.

“I’ll be fine,” Hiccup responded seriously, “…by tomorrow—maybe.”

“Can you get up?” Astrid asked.

Before he could reply, Hiccup scowled at another wave of pain. Astrid bent down and began untying his prosthetic. Once she was done, she started massaging his leg.

“Don’t worry, Hiccup,” she comforted him, “it’ll pass.” Slowly, Hiccup took deep breaths, and the pain diminished.

“I can get up,” Hiccup assured Astrid once his suffering had lessened. Astrid looked at him with a warning on her face. “Really, Astrid,” Hiccup reassured her, “I can at least make it back to my hut.”

“Fine,” Astrid said, standing and holding her hand out for Hiccup to grab, “but if you so much as let out a whimper, I’m carrying you.”

“Thank you, milady,” Hiccup spoke, pulling himself up with Astrid’s help. She held his prosthetic in her hand, and Hiccup, hopping as he went along, leaned on her.

She helped Hiccup the entire way, except for in defending him when Toothless saw the state he was in.

Once Astrid helped Hiccup lie down on his bed, a groan escaped him.

“Hiccup? Are you okay? Has the pain started up again?” Astrid asked, distressed.

“It started again once we began walking,” Hiccup answered. Then, at Astrid’s surprised expression, he added, trying to smile, “I couldn’t have possibly whimpered and lost my dignity, you see.”

“Hiccup! Ugh, that’s not what I meant,” Astrid groaned.

“I know, Astrid. I just… didn’t want… you… to worry about me.” Hiccup said arduously through his pain. He shifted his gaze to his dragon, who had made his way up to the loft and was now worriedly pacing around the two teenagers. “You either, bud.”

Astrid’s features softened and she leaned closer to him. “It’s been too late for that for a while, Hiccup,” she said, grabbing hold of his hand.

Hiccup squeezed his eyes shut as the pain started to become unbearable again. “Thanks for… sticking by me, Astrid,” he uttered.

“Of course, you muttonhead,” Astrid replied, “I wouldn’t have it any other way. Unless, naturally, if you could tell me whenever you need my help. Seriously, Hiccup, I will never think and would not have thought less of you for it. This suffering in silence of yours has to stop, okay?”

But Hiccup had succumbed to darkness once again.

“Oh, Hiccup,” Astrid sighed sadly. Toothless crawled up next to her and warbled his concern. Astrid scratched him under the chin. “I know, Toothless. But at least he’s asleep now.”

Without thinking, Astrid placed a light kiss on Hiccup’s forehead. She’d stay for a while, in case Hiccup woke up again and needed her.

In a few minutes, though, Astrid was asleep too, her hand still in Hiccup’s and her head resting on his bed. Toothless watched them for a few moments, and then he heated up his rock and slept as well.

Notes:

Well, I hope that sufficed for all you Hiccstrid lovers out there. :)

Next up: Hiccup!

Thanks for reading, and don’t forget to leave comments and kudos!

St. Anthony of Padua, patron saint of amputees, pray for us!

God Bless

Chapter 6 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/64136365/chapters/165494989) : Hiccup

Notes:

Hi!

Thank you for making it this far!

(See the end of the chapter for more notes (#chapter_6_endnotes) .)

The rising sun shone into the Clubhouse, casting long shadows of the Riders already gathered there. Astrid, Snotlout, and Fishlegs waited in silence. They were expecting Hiccup and the twins any minute.

"Isn't it a bit weird Hiccup didn't show up before Snotlout?" Astrid asked Fishlegs.

"Hey!" Snotlout shouted.

The other two ignored him. "Yeah, come to think of it, it *is* a little strange Hiccup's not here yet," Fishlegs answered, "maybe he went on a morning flight with Toothless."

"I saw—" Snotlout started.

"That doesn't make sense," Astrid interrupted, "he's always back in time for breakfast when he goes flying."

"Well, mayb—"

"I don't know, Astrid. Maybe he found something that distracted him."

"Would you please just listen to me!" Snotlout yelled, waving his hands. "Hiccup had the sniffles last night although he tried to deny it when I noticed. If he really did have them, he's probably sick by now and accidentally sleeping in."

"Oh," Astrid and Fishlegs said together.

Just then, the patter of footsteps was heard on the floor. Ruffnut and Tuffnut stepped inside.

"Have you seen Hiccup?" Astrid interrogated them the second they came in.

"No," Tuffnut responded.

"I did!" Ruffnut exclaimed, leaning back on a wall, "you won't be seeing him this morning."

"Why?" they all asked.

"He's sick," Ruffnut replied easily, "I saw him trying to repair one of the bridges out in the dark this morning. He was throwing up in a barrel as I came by. I told him to go back to his hut and rest or else I'd throw him into the boar pit."

"And what did he do?" Astrid asked, eyes intent on Ruffnut. The room was silent.

Taken back, Ruffnut hesitantly responded. "He got on Toothless and rode back to his hut."

"How do you know? Did you *see* him go into his hut?" Fishlegs inquired.

Ruffnut's smile began to fade. "Um, well—no…"

"And you *threatened* him to go and rest?" Astrid asked, distraught.

"Well, I just—I… oh no," Ruffnut moaned.

In an instant, all five of the Riders were sprinting toward their dragons and mounting them.

"Way to go Ruff!" Snotlout reprimanded, "threatening Hiccup to rest means daring him not to. He's probably getting as far away from us as possible right now."

"I know, I know! I'm sorry!" Ruffnut apologized, "that stubborn moron would fly halfway across the archipelago before he would rest. I should've locked him up in his hut while I had the chance."

Astrid didn't have time for their bickering. If Hiccup truly was sick and avoiding them, who knew what trouble he could get into? "Guys, we have to find Hiccup before he hurts himself."

Tuffnut spoke, trying to reassure everyone. "Do not fret, my fellow Riders," he said, lifting his arms and moving them in a placating manner, "we know he's not alone. T would never let him leave by himself."

"I know, but that won't stop Hiccup from overworking himself—" Astrid began.

"Or getting hurt," Snotlout added.

"Or getting sicker than he already is," Ruffnut remarked.

"Or completely disregarding his health," Fishlegs spouted out nervously.

The Riders sat atop their dragons for a moment in silence, reflecting worriedly anbout all the trouble Hiccup could get (and had gotten) into by refusing to care for himself. They had to find him.

"Ok, so, do we have any clue where he went?" Ruffnut asked.

“Probably as far as he can without being the biggest idiot in the archipelago.” Snotlout commented with a disgruntled frown and crossed arms.

Fishlegs cast down his eyes from where he sat on Meatlug. He didn’t want to believe Hiccup was the biggest idiot in the archipelago. He didn’t want to believe Hiccup would have ignored his wellbeing like that again. Hiccup had to have learned *something* after all these months, right?

“Maybe…” he began tentatively, “maybe he left a note.”

They all looked at him like he had sprouted another head.

“We could at least check!” he said.

Glancing around at each other, they all heaved a collective sigh.

“We might as well. Before we go flying in random directions, at least,” Astrid remarked.

“Fine,” Snotlout said, “maybe he accidentally left a clue in his hut.”

The Riders nodded and took flight. As they landed by Hiccup’s hut, Tuffnut pointed at the door.

“Hey, there *is* a note!” he said, gesturing to a piece of paper stuck to the front of Hiccup’s hut.

They all dismounted and gathered around. “It’s definitely Hiccup’s handwriting,” Fishlegs commented. He took it down and read out loud, *“Don’t come in looking for me. I’m resting.”*

“Ha! Nice try, Hiccup,” Snotlout said, immediately flinging open the door.

The Riders gaped. There, on the bed, was a brown-haired boy lying fast asleep and a Night Fury right by his side.

They stared in shock. Eyes wide, mouths opened, arms limp by their sides, each Rider stood dumbfounded in Hiccup’s doorway. They couldn’t move; they couldn’t speak.

Until, at last, the light had shone into the hut long enough. Toothless raised his head and scowled at them all.

Mechanically, without redirecting his eyes, Snotlout grabbed the door and pulled it down.

Only when the door had cut off their view to the inside did the Riders drop their gaze.

With his hand still on the door, Snotlout slowly looked up.

“Guys,” he whispered momentously, “we *did* it.”

Gradually, they all lifted their eyes and looked at one another, the corners of their mouths starting to twitch.

“Wooooooohooooo!” Ruffnut suddenly exploded, and Tuffnut hollered his joy.

Fishlegs and Astrid bent over and laughed.

“Snotlout, Snotlout, oi, oi, oi!” Snotlout yelled, jumping away from the door.

“Shh, shh, everyone,” Astrid ordered, trying to stop laughing. “We don’t want to wake him.”

“Guys!” Snotlout shouted, (only a little bit quieter), “we actually did it! We got Hiccup to rest without making him hurt himself!”

“*We* didn’t do it, Snotlout,” Fishlegs interjected, “*he* did.”

“Hey, Fishface! I deserve some credit. If I hadn’t berated him every time he ignored his own wellbeing, I doubt he would have ever learned.” Snotlout retorted.

“We deserve credit too!” Ruffnut yelled. “‘Twas I who threatened to throw him into the boar pit.”

“Indeed, Sister Nut,” Tuffnut declared, “‘twas also us who many a moon ago pointed out to Hiccup that refusing to let us help him just made us end up helping him even more.”

For once, Astrid didn’t mind their clamor; she was just happy Hiccup wasn’t trying to overwork himself miles away. Fishlegs, however…

“Guys!” he scolded, “Astrid just told you to quiet down! Could you please take it somewhere else? In fact, we should all Hiccup rest.”

“Fishlegs is right. Let’s head back to the Clubhouse,” Astrid said, “I’ll come back and check on him after breakfast.”

“Correction,” Snotlout interrupted, “we’ll all come back and check on him.”

“Yeah!” Tuffnut agreed, “it’d be nice to know that he actually is okay and not dying or anything. That would be a real shame after all our rejoicing.”

“Then come on! We’ll come back later,” Fishlegs said, mounting Meatlug and flying away. They all followed him.

* * *

The sun had risen, and it was already midmorning as the Riders finished their porridge. Before they had departed, however, a very distinct footfall was heard on the wooden floor.

“Hiccup!” Astrid called joyously as Hiccup came into sight. He smiled and gave a little wave of his hand, supporting himself on Toothless.

“How are you feeling?” Astrid asked, helping him to the table.

“Been better,” Hiccup replied meekly, “I think I caught a stomach bug.” He sat down, and Astrid stood beside him.

“You have a fever,” Astrid told Hiccup, feeling his forehead.

“Here,” Snotlout said. He handed Hiccup a cup of water.

“Thanks, Snotlout,” Hiccup replied.

“Do you think you can keep anything down?” Astrid asked.

“I don’t know, maybe a little.” Hiccup responded. He took the bowl of porridge that was handed to him and drank some of the water.

“Listen, gang. I’m probably not going to be much help today,” Hiccup addressed everyone, “you guys might have to carry my weight for a while.”

When no one immediately objected, he continued. “Astrid, could you lead the training today? Ruff and Tuff, if you both promise not to make a booby trap out of it, you can finish fixing the bridge. And Snotlout, if you could cover my patrol, that’d be great.”

The addressed Riders just nodded. But then, Snotlout winked at the others.

“Ugh, why do *we* have to do all this?” he complained.

“Yeah, why can’t *you* do *your own* work?” Tuffnut grumbled, playing along.

Instead of catching on to the plot, Hiccup very seriously replied, “I know it isn’t fair, but I really think I need some time to rest for now. If I went out and tried to help you, I’d probably do a horrible job and just end up back in bed anyway, and that’d probably just give you all more work to do.”

“But how do you *know*?” Ruffnut asked.

“I don’t… but I know you all can handle it. You’ve proven that. But, if you really don’t want to, I can try—“

“Hiccup! We’re joking,” Astrid interrupted with a grin.

“Awww, Astrid!” Tuffnut whined, “I wanted to see if we could get him to actually apologize for being sick!”

“Wait, what?” Hiccup questioned.

“We’re joking, Hiccup,” Astrid explained, “we’re not actually mad.”

“No, Hiccup,” Fishlegs said sarcastically, “actually, we’re *so appalled* you’re asking us to fill in for you when you’re *sick*.”

“But we are!” Tuffnut said seriously, “I’m shocked, at least. I mean, when was the last time you actually asked us to fill in for you for anything? You’ve insisted to fill in for us even when we’re *not* sick.”

Hiccup chuckled. “Well, I figured you guys were probably all tired of me being ‘Hiccup the Hypocritical’,” he said, referring to Snotlout.

“Amen, brother,” Ruffnut remarked.

They all laughed. “Well!” Snotlout declared, getting up, “let’s go and show Hiccup how capable we are of surviving without him.”

Snotlout ran over to where Hookfang was standing. Eagerly, the twins and Fishlegs followed him and mounted their dragons. Astrid stayed behind to make sure Hiccup didn’t need anything else. Before the other Risers could fly off, however, Hiccup called after Fishlegs.

“Um, Fishlegs? Do you think you could, maybe… get me some tea for the fever?”

“Oh my Thor, Hiccup,” he replied, “don’t you think you could’ve, maybe… *asked me sooner?* I’ll be right back.”

Astrid and Hiccup watched them fly away.

“I’m proud of you, Hiccup,” Astrid said.

“For what?,” he asked with a self-deprecating smile, “For being weak and pathetic?”

“No, being weak is being human,” Astrid replied, placing her hands on Hiccup’s shoulders. “Acknowledging your weaknesses and relying on others to help you? That’s strength.”

Hiccup sighed, watching his friends flying off in the distance.

“Words of wisdom, milady,” he observed.

Notes:

siiiiiiigh… it’s over!

Thank you so much for reading. Please don’t forget to leave comments and kudos, and let me know which chapter was your favorite!

Remember, we all have strength from God. Any suffering we endure or weakness we experience just makes us stronger and more united to Jesus, the Suffering Servant by whose wounds we are healed. We can’t always rely on everyone we meet to stand by us, but we can always rely on God to love us since it’s His very love that keeps us in existence.

St. Jude, patron saint of hopeless cases 🙃, pray for us!

So, until next time,
God Bless! <3

Close (#)